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Cover:TheDead Matter Image Provided by Edward Douglas



The summer is almost over and so is the block buster movie season. We have seen our fair share of remakes, teen comedies, and films that I honestly don't know why they even spent the money to make.

With the year of the loud action movie behind us, I am hoping to see more indy films. I am going to make a conscious effort to spend more quality time with my wife on the couch, watching more of the films that YOU, the SCARS reader or follower, are making.

So be prepared, if you don't come to us, we are going to start coming to you. We will be on an active hunt for the most original, no-budget films that we think should be out there, getting attention. If your cameras have been rolling and you don't know where to turn for coverage, look no further!

We want to give you a home! Our website has endless amounts of space, and our pages will be lined with as much as we can give you.

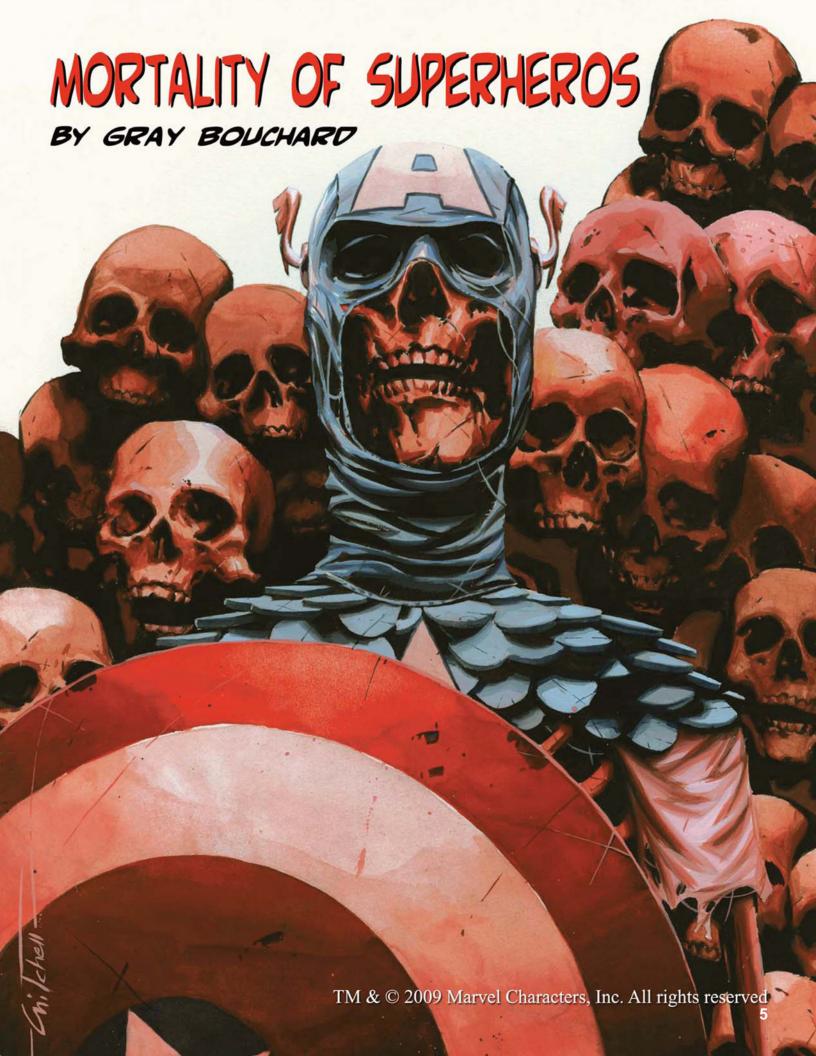
As Emma Lazarus so eloquently put it to the people entering this great country...

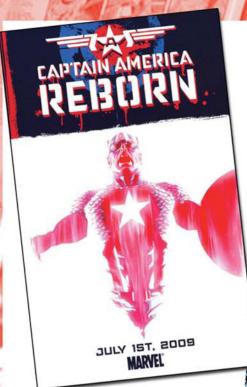
"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

If you create it, we'll put it out there for you. All you have to do is tell us about it, and we'll make sure to cover it any way we can.

The Wizard of SCARS







Horror movies arguably share some of the same audience as comics, and have always played with the somewhat permeable membrane of mortality by featuring characters who are dead (zombies, ghosts), undead (vampires), or basically unkillable (Jason, Freddy). This of course reflects the genre's fundamental tie to fears of mortality, mining this discomfort with mortality into something to thrill and enthrall audiences. So let's assume horror movies share the same audience as comics, and that you care about this June's announced resurrection of Captain America.

For whatever reason, the assassination of Captain America gained a lot of mainstream press, if only to be relegated to the "Now you know what the creepy guy next to you at work thinks is exciting" portion of the five o'clock news. It's not the first time we've seen, "Comic Hero Resurrected!" in the news lately. Just last year, Barry Allen again took up the mantel of the hero of The Flash within the pages of Grant Morrison's "Final Crisis."

Captain America has now joined Barry Allen as a textbook example of the phenomenon "comic book death."

So what. Of course he's a victim of "comic book death." He's a comic book character. He died. What else is there to it?



The irony of the term is that, rather than referring to the death of the character, it actually has more to do with life. As Wikipedia (unimpeachable tome of wisdom) defines it, comic book death is,

"used somewhat ironically in the comic book fan community to refer to the killing off and subsequent return of a long-running character. This irony addresses the fact that while death is a serious subject, a comic book death is generally not taken seriously and is rarely permanent or meaningful."

These short term deaths (an assassination in the case of Captain America) tends to be the kind of shenanigans that get the fanboys and girls (...OK, boys) grumbling and lose the casual (re: not comic book obsessed) observer, causing both to define all death in comics as (like quoted above) "meaningless." The question is, with so many characters who have felt the icy grip

of death upon the shoulder, only to turn around, kick death in the balls, and run away, how can death (and subsequently, LIFE) in comics mean ANYTHING at all?

This brings us back to the case of poor, undead Barry Allen.

While some fans are gleeful to see this Silver Age icon return, others are skeptical of his return. Comic blogger Valerie D'Orazio essentially summarizes the unease when she says,

"I always considered the Barry Allen Flash death as one of the cornerstones of the modern DC Universe. It represented the trauma and sacrifice of Crisis, and touched each of the major DCU heroes personally... It's just that every time you bring these characters back, you undermine the emotional resonance of those original stories surrounding the hero's tragic demise."

## IS NO ONE SAFE FROM THESE POWER MAD RESSURECTIONISTS?

Adding to this tension is the fact that Barry not only died, but STAYED DEAD for such a long time. In an age where a character can die and be resurrected only panels later, Allen clocked in an impressive 23 years underground, meaning many modern readers have never known him as the Flash until recently. With his resurrection after so many years, the idea of death in the comic book world can hardly be thought of as frightening.

Is no one safe from these bloodthirsty fiends intent on reviving your favorite denizen of the dead? What kind of world do we live in where comic book writers think they can get away with bringing back any character they please? IS NO ONE SAFE FROM THESE POWER MAD RESSURECTIONISTS?

Maybe we shouldn't grumble. Maybe we should celebrate the return of beloved characters. We do it for horror all the time, and not just for supernatural villains. Take

Laurie Strode. Her reappearance in "H20" undercuts every aspect of parts 4 through 6. Yet, with Jamie Lee at the helm, no one

hesitated to pretend her mentioned death in "Halloween 4" never happened. Fans might have even be said to be... joyous.

Grant Morrison, comic book writer and plotter of "Final Crisis," seemed hopeful for the same sort of reaction. In a New York Daily news interview, he brushed, "That's the point of comics – [characters] don't have to die, because they're fictional creations... We can do anything with them, and we can make them come back and make them defy death. And that's why people read comics, to get away from the way life works, which is quite cruel and unheroic and ends in death."

What Morrison doesn't understand however, is the moral code of comics. Comic book resurrections have a different significance than the endless "re-imaginings" of movies, or flat out death. Because in comics, the characters who manage to stay dead truly mean something.

Take a moment to imagine what would happen to Peter Parker if Uncle Ben walked through the front door, in something other than a dream sequence. Or if the Waynes dropped in on Bruce in the Bat Cave announcing their return from what was an indefinitely long vacation.

The only reason Uncle Ben or the Waynes had a life in comics to begin with was to give their respective heroes context and motive. Batman's parents and origin don't even feature in his first appearance, and only surface for a few panels many issues later before being gunned down. Uncle Ben fares little better, living only long enough to impart Peter with his classic mantra "With Great Power Must Come Great Responsibility."

In this way, Comic Book Death isn't truly as frivolous as it seems. Yes, death in comics is a pretty permeable membrane. But this gives rise to a wholly unique understanding befitting comics as a unique, meta-fictional form in the tradition of folktales, whose stories of crafty tricksters and brawny heroes outwitting or defying death are told in almost every culture.

These tales are viewed both as art and entertainment with no conflict between the two, as they serve to both enlighten (as art) and divert (as entertainment). Ananzi, Brier Rabbit, Momotaro, Old Man Coyote, Hercules: these are characters who will not die, so long as there is a story to be told. Some even have stories about their deaths, yet these do not stem the flow of new interpretations and whirring fabrications.

While this split between art and entertainment is not perfectly reconciled in the comic world, comics are, in a sense, the closest we can get to modern folktales and legends. Both unpretentious, yet steeped in convoluted continuity, they draw upon timeless sensibilities to craft something unique and strangely enticing: A fictional universe where the good (or at least interesting/useful) need never die. Or at least stay dead.





# RON JEREMY TALKS ABOUT HIS

**Interview by Raymond Dowaliby** 

hen the Fields brothers dreamed up the plot to "One Eyed Monster" - an alien menace descends upon a porno set, possessing the leading man's penis and detaching itself from his body to go on a killing spree – there must've only been one man they had in mind. I mean, who's the obvious answer for a dude with a dick big enough for murder? The best part about "One Eyed Monster" is that they got that man and his 9 3/4 " package to star: Ron Jeremy.

**SCARS:** How did you get involved with "One Eyed Monster"?

RON JEREMY: Because a couple of charming boys, called the Fields brothers, these three practicing homosexuals – I'm kidding – approached me, and asked me to do the project. It was a marvelous, hysterically funny script, starring one of my favorite body parts.

**SCARS:** You have some major screen history with Annette Haven. How was it working with her on a horror set?

**RJ:** It was fun. She takes her acting seriously. I've never had the thrill of being in a sex scene with her, so horror is the next best thing.

SCARS: Back around the time "Boondock Saints" was being released, you and I talked quite a bit here in Providence about how you would love to do more "legit" work. Do you think "One Eyed Monster" will take you to the next level?

**RJ:** If it's a smash hit it will. It all depends on events beyond my control. If every film I ever did was a smash hit, I'd be Ben Stiller right now.

SCARS: What can you tell us about yourself that the public would be shocked to know? Are you a classical music fan?

RJ: I'm a classical music player. I play piano, violin, harmonica, and recorder very well. The public would probably be shocked to know that my mother was a spy during World War II. She was in the OSS as a decoder and a cryptographer, working with the allies, and the OSS became the CIA in the late 40s. She was a lieutenant - people don't know that. Now, if they read my autobiography, then they know it.

**SCARS:** What tips from the school of Ron Jeremy can you give our readers about the biz, adult or otherwise?

**RJ:** That both in porn and in mainstream films, it is very, very difficult to get good roles. They say in porn there are no small parts - only small actor's parts. People think it's so easy to get into porn. It's not. You have to be in the right place at the right time, do a good job, make the right connections... just like in mainstream films. It's not easy.

SCARS: Well, now that both you and your penis have appeared opposite each other in a film with "One Eyed Monster," what possibly could be left to do?

**RJ:** To do a radical Muslim terrorist movie where I get my head chopped off, and then I co-star with my head. A Jewish pornographer in Iraq? I'd definitely get my head sliced off from the torso, so I can do a dialogue scene with my own head.

Thank you Ron for taking the time with us and we look forward to seeing you soon....



# Rewriting Interview by Alyson Charlette

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To what extent will a good Christian family go for each other? In "Thicker Than Water: The Vampire Diaries Part 1" the Baxter family must go to great lengths to provide for a fledgling vampire. Scars recently spoke to writer/director Paul Messerer about the first part of his vampire trilogy.

SCARS: How did you get your start in film?

PAUL MESSERER: I have an editing background. I think the transition from editing to directing is a good one. A good director should have a little knowledge of every aspect of production and editing just takes longer to master. No offense to good editors who just started, but it's like flying hours. It becomes second nature. You just have to pay your dues. I've cut everything from porn to infomercials. A good director is editing in his head as he shoots. And nothing really leaves a "signature" like editing. I think all directors should edit their own films. It's where the story is really created. To me it is part of the directing process. I still rely on editing for a living. My last gig was "Model Latina." Everything else I learned on the spot.

**SCARS:** What are your favorite films?

PM: My favorite films are ones that have a story behind them, usually debut features from great directors. Filmmaking is the ultimate adventure. Especially when you're walking a budget tightrope. So I'm actually a bigger fan of indie flicks. Who doesn't like an underdog? My favorite film ever? Don't laugh, it's "Strictly Ballroom." I'm not ashamed to admit it. I owe a lot of my style, if not my sentiment (which is death and destruction), to that little picture. My favorite horror film? "The Passion of the Christ." Bloody good show! Took torture porn to a whole new level. Eat your heart out, "Saw."

SCARS: Tell us a little about "Thicker Than Water."

PM: "Thicker Than Water" is the first part of a projected trilogy. It is a new take on the vampire genre. My vampires are as realistic as possible. I took out everything that is not scientifically feasible. And with it, I took out all that I thought was old and stale in the genre; the scowling, the posturing, and most importantly, the romance. I left us with a bare bones story about the Baxters, a family stricken with Vampirism. This is a vampire nobody would want to be.

Vampirism is an involuntary condition. This allows your characters to remain

sympathetic whilst committing unspeakable crimes. That is what drew me the most to the subgenre. The moral playground. Most other monsters are intrinsically evil. Vampires, though they're usually painted as such, really have no reason to be. Just because you become a vampire, doesn't mean you become an asshole. You're still the same person, you just need blood to

exist. From a pragmatic perspective, this was my other focus. What happens when a vampire starves? Devon Dionne, as the Vampire, Helen, does a great job conveying the pangs of blood withdrawals. Imagine heroin withdrawals times a thousand.

SCARS: The film has gotten lots of positive feedback on the festival circuit. How has that experience been?

PM: Yes, we're consistently hitting under ten thousand on IMDB. I'm amazed how much buzz it's generated before we've even gotten distribution. We did a year on the festival circuit, got ten awards, before I started a viral marketing campaign to raise its "pedigree." Why not? That's what the Internet is for. The horror community has been very receptive. I have gotten tons of free publicity. I think it's because no other genre owes as much of its heritage to indie flicks. Sure, there's an over-saturation of indie horror out there but if you have something new to say, people will listen. And then they'll talk. Hell, we cover our bodies with tattoos from our favorite flicks. Like we're not going to celebrate and spread the word when we like something. Horror fans, the real ones, they live it. They dress it, they sacrifice they're bodies to it with ungodly metallic manipulation - they're hardcore! They shout it from the rooftops. So yeah, thanks to everyone who has gotten behind this flick. If and when it finally does show up on DVD shelves, it will be all because of you.

SCARS: Where are you at with "Thicker than Water?" Are you doing more festivals? When will the DVD be out?

PM: More festivals are not out of the question, but now I am concentrating on





distribution. The buzz is definitely helping. It is a very low budget film with no recognizable talent, so it had to make waves on its own before distributors would even consider it. But I'll keep you posted. I'd like to sign with someone by the end of the summer.

**SCARS:** Tell us about putting the sound-track together.

PM: The good stuff is out there. A lot of it never sees the light of day because it may not conform to whatever is popular at the time (which is usually crap) so you just have to look under a few more rocks to find it. Sites like MySpace make it easier. We have a pretty awesome soundtrack consisting of mainly unsigned acts and hopefully the film will give them a boost. In general, I think film as a vehicle should be more open to discovering new talent, whether actors, musicians, or filmmakers, rather than just reusing the same old all the time. I think it's almost a responsibility. One thing I think I'll never stop doing is looking for new talent.

SCARS: Speaking of talent, can you tell us a little but about how the casting process went? How did you find your actors?



PM: I put an ad out in "Backstage" and got about 500 responses. I held auditions and I found my stars. Good actors will make your life a lot easier. I had a lot to worry about but the acting was not one of them. It was a joy to work with them. That is what I really like about directing, creating characters with actors. If you get a serious actor, it can get

pretty intense. Everything else is just creating a stage for actors to do their thing. I'm kind of in awe of the process.

There are three female leads, all of whom I think will be stars. Jo Jo Hristova, who plays Mom, is actually younger than Michael Strelow, who plays her son. Eilis Cahill, who plays Lara, the teenage goth from whose perspective the story is told, is an incredible character actress in her own right. All three have multiple acting nominations on the festival circuit.

**SCARS:** Is the story an allegory for acceptance, or possible acceptance of homosexuality?

PM: That's an interesting question. Most of my themes are actually taken from the Old Testament – Cain and Abel, Moses, Abraham. You can't go wrong with those. But tolerance is definitely a theme. I find homosexuality interesting because of the moral implications supposedly associated with it. Since this is an immorality tale, homosexuality seemed like a good point of comparison.

In the 2004 presidential election, gay marriage had somehow become this predominant debate. Meanwhile, a million Iraqis were being slaughtered by our military. That is moral relativity. The Baxters live in the ultimate glass house. They kill people. So when they make judgment calls about anything, it's kind of absurd. Satire is created through exaggeration. Horror is the ultimate exaggeration of reality. It

afforded me the opportunity to create a parody of some of our most cherished values, many of which tread the fine line of hypocrisy. A couple of Mormons also get eaten in the flick. These are the guys most avidly fighting gay marriage. Yet they themselves have kind of made a laughing stock of the institution by marrying multiple teenage girls and what not. Glass houses.

**SCARS:** What can you tell us about the second part of the trilogy?

PM: Part 2 - "The Serpent Queen" - will be more dedicated to the exposition of the mythology, which is pretty complex. Part 1 is very much the tip of the iceberg. The world of vampires will be revealed, as well as those who hunt and imprison them. Forget everything you think you know about vampires

SCARS: What is next for you besides "The Vampire Diaries?"

PM: I am working on several scripts. I will probably continue using horror conventions, if not making horror films outright. But I definitely want to feel like I'm doing something new every time. Otherwise what's the point? I know the formula. Now I just have to figure out how to avoid it. In that sense, I think "Thicker Than Water" is a good start.

SCARS: Thanks Paul! To learn more about "The Vampire Diaries," visit www.bloodjunky.com.





So just who would direct a movie about a zombie sex slave, the undead love-toy for a couple of misfit teens? For directors (and filmmaking partners-in-crime since age thirteen) Marcel Sarmiento and Gadi Harel, DEADGIRL was the movie they just had to have. Not surprisingly, bringing DEADGIRL to life was not without its controversy. Here they share what drove them forward during shooting, the trials of casting the allusive Deadgirl herself, and what's next to follow up their cult success. Dark Sky Films releases DEADGIRL September 15, on DVD.

SCARS: As directors, what made the both of you want to tackle a film like DEAD-GIRL?

MARCEL SARMIENTO: A story like this only comes along every so often. Once we read it, we couldn't stop thinking about it. Half of the challenge was convincing Trent Haaga just to let us do it. That took six months.

GADI HAREL: When you read the script and you knew that if you don't handle the material right, the movie was going to be a disaster. That's a thrill. It was like we were constantly daring each other: Do you really think you can pull this off?

**SCARS**: What did you like most about working on it?

MS: Working with people that were cool, and people that, like myself, wanted to do something special. Nobody was there for a paycheck, that's for sure.

**GH**: The general attitude on set. There was an excitement to the production because we all knew from the beginning that this was a really unique opportunity.

**SCARS**: What inspirations did the both of you incorporate into DEADGIRL?

MS: It wasn't horror movies. It was mostly movies like STAND BY ME, and RIVER'S EDGE, and THE OUTSIDERS. The more we approached it as something other than horror, the more horrific it would hopefully become.

GH: Also a lot of our own youth. We met as teenagers in the suburbs. At that age you try and carve out your own corner of the world, so you feel like you matter a little bit. These characters are doing the same thing, although in a much more twisted and surreal way. But there's that feeling of your friends being the only thing you really have that resonated with us.

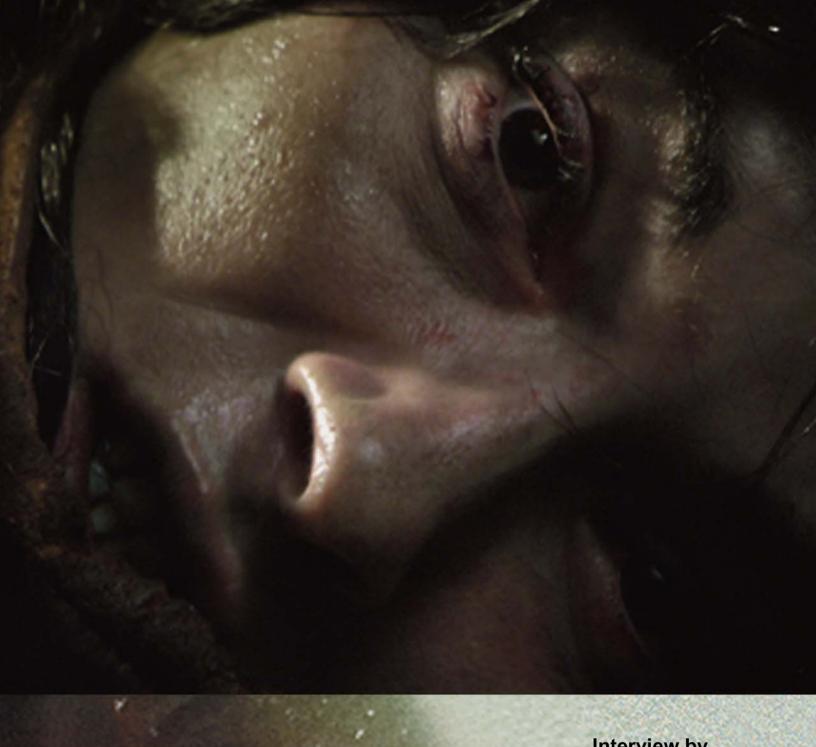
**SCARS**: Was there any controversy during or after the film?

MS: Of course, the whole damn thing is rife with controversy. After every screening, half the audience wants to shake our hands and the other half wants to kick us in the balls.

GH: There's definitely a wide range of reactions, with people very passionate on both sides of the debate. The funny thing is lot of people had assumed that the film would be very controversial with women and feminists, but the truth is that they've embraced the movie and seen it for what it is more often than not. Oddly enough, it often seems

PHOTO: Harris Charalambous





Interview by J.C. Walsh

SCARS: At times when working together, did you feel like Richie and JT? Who thought what was more important - story or gore - and who would be the one to push the limits?

MS: I think when one explores the darker recesses of ourselves, there's a little bit of Rickie and JT lurking inside each of us.

GH: Even though we knew we were going to focus on story first and gore second, we also knew we'd only have one chance to get everything. So our footage has a lot more extreme stuff. We shot it all, just to be safe. Maybe someday when things have evolved and this movie is considered tame, we'll do a new edit that includes that footage.

**SCARS**: Character development was a strong point in the movie. Was it difficult to put together the right cast to bring this disturbing story to life?

MS: There's no way this movie would work without the right cast, and we were

fortunate to have such a great casting department. But the actors we ended up with all had one thing in common which was they really wanted to do it. No one involved was doing this as just another job. They read it and all lobbied hard for the part. When you have a script like this, that doesn't come along very often, that helps.

GH: There was also some luck involved. Casting the Deadgirl was almost impossible, but a friend of a friend recommended Jenny Spain, who was living in Michigan at the time. It was just luck that we found her. And there's no movie without her.

**SCARS**: Any chance of a DEADGIRL sequel or even prequel?

MS: It's hard to imagine going through that all again, all the emotions the shoot brought up. It was pretty hard on everyone. But you never know.

**GH**: The story does lend itself pretty easily to both, but nothing's in the works. We'll wait and see how the first one does. SCARS: How did the two of you end up working together?

**MS**: We needed \$200 to option Trent's first script, and I only had a \$100.

**GH**: We made our first movies together when we were 13 years old. It's been a long-term collaboration.

**SCARS**: With both of you having directed films independently, what are the pros and cons of working as a pair?

MS: Honestly, working together has not only broadened our creative output, I think Gadi would agree, but frankly is also just a lot more fun.

**SCARS**: What can you tell us about the next film for the two of you, the remake of

MS: It's going to be little mind-blowing I hope, another project that's not quite what one might think going in. It's very dark and disturbing, mixed with this sci-fi element that's really unique because it's also



what's really happening right now, although very few people know it. I can't say too much except I can't wait to start shooting. It's not a horror movie, but it probably will be creepy, and dare I say, controversial because of the creepiness.

GH: The original is a great little thriller by the very talented Jannik Johansen. It would've been silly to just try and remake it in English. So what we did is take the basic story in a completely unexpected direction. Gold Circle is letting us make some pretty bold choices. I think, like DEADGIRL, it's going to end up causing a lot of debate.

**SCARS**: Any other future projects in the works?

MS: Yes, we're writing like crazy and hoping to be shooting another one early next year. We miss craft service. Buying groceries just cost too damn much.









Interview By Fallon Masterson

f you'd asked model Jenny Spain what would be her first big film break, playing the comatose object-of-affection for horny high-schoolers might not have been her first guess. But Spain's role of the Dead Girl has risen above normal zombie cinema, and opened up the sort of debates horror movies were first meant to invoke. Now, Jenny tells us why she took such an intense role, how it's worse to be naked around a dog than guy, and what happened when her father showed up at a screening for Deadgirl.

**SCARS**: Marcel and Gadi (Deadgirl directors) told us that one of the best parts about working on this movie, was every actor really wanted to be in it. That being said, what made you want to be the Dead Girl?

JENNY SPAIN: I read the script and thought, "No one really has ever done this before. It's different from other horror movies and it would really stand out." I saw the character of the Dead Girl as a symbol. The script and characters are pretty intense, and send a pretty powerful message. I was all for it.

**SCARS**: What was your first day on the job like? What was running through your head?

JS: Oh man, my first day was pretty crazy. I admit I was a little nervous, especially when 95% of our crew was male. There's a scene where the dog jumps on

top of me on the gurney. I really had to lay there while this dog had to jump over me. You could only imagine the stuff that was running through my head. I'm naked, this dog has claws. Let's just say, I will probably never work with animals again.;)

**SCARS**: Were there any days where you just felt like you'd had enough?



JS: Honestly, I had a lot of fun filming Deadgirl. Of course there were times where I was extremely exhausted from lack of sleep. I would probably get 2-3 hours of sleep if I was lucky. Jim Ojala our SPFX artist and I had to be the first ones on location, not really knowing what the schedule would be like because it was always changing. I had to have a high level of trust with Jim and we really bonded. He made it fun because when we were done with make-up and waiting, we were out exploring the hospital, getting into trouble!

**SCARS**: What was your on-set relationship like with Noah Segan (JT)?

JS: Nobody could have played JT better than Noah. He was just so intense and intimidating. There were days where it frustrated me and made me mad. We were really feeding off each other it brought out the animal in me. I would think to myself, "Go ahead. Be a jerk. You'll get yours." He was serious and professional, and I admired him. I thought to myself, "Let's do this". I didn't want him to feel sympathetic for me. I gave him his space, he gave me mine. We understood each other... Ladies and gentlemen, that was Deadgirl.

**SCARS**: How would you wind down after a day of playing Dead Girl?

JS: I would be exhausted because I would

be spending my time trying to scrub the layers and layers of make-up off my body. I felt so bad for the house cleaners at the hotel because those white towels were BLACK. When I had days off, I would head to San Diego and spend the day with my family.

SCARS: Recently you told the New York Post your father and brother loved the movie! Was this their initial reaction when hearing about the part? Or did you have to drag them to the movie kicking and screaming?

JS: Haha, honestly?! They didn't know what the movie really was about. I told Gadi and Marcel that they were coming out to AFI Film Festival and they were like, "Aw man." They didn't know what to expect, I didn't know what to expect, and the reaction was relieving and shocking. My brother said, "That's my kind of movie," and my dad's reaction was "Cool, Jen!" Those reactions were good enough for me, no complaints. They liked it!

**SCARS**: Do you pay much attention to reviews? There are definitely two distinct camps. I watched Deadgirl with a guy, and he couldn't believe I could like it as a female.

JS: I do pay attention to the reviews. I take the bad with the good. Everyone is entitled to their own opinions, thoughts,

and I love to hear them all. Yes, women do have a different view on it, not all of it is positive. I think women who are open minded ROCK! There are a lot of women who are judgmental and critical, especially when it comes to a woman who is exposing herself in a way as Deadgirl. It makes a great discussion.

**SCARS**: What can you tell us about your next role – more horror – in Trust?

JS: I play a lead role as Elaine Tanner. I never watch reality TV shows, and if I do some of the people are annoying and I think, "Please, someone get rid of this person."

In Trust, all of those thoughts of the people you love and hate come to reality. Finally a reality TV show you want to watch, where people turn up missing, murdered, with lots of blood and sex. You can't trust anyone! They all want to fight for their 15 minutes of fame that could cost them their life. Some of the characters laugh it off likes it's a part of the show. It's all the things you want to see and wish for. It's a mixture of SAW and Big Brother, and will remind you of Scream with a little of I Know What You Did Last Summer. We start filming in October in Sedona. AZ. I'm excited to be a part of it! Look for it in 2010.



or over a decade, we've come to know Midnight Syndicate as the perfect "haunted house band," providing startling, imaginative music as the backdrop for any creepy scenario. Now, with Edward Douglas's movie, "The Dead Matter," we get to see what things look like when the mind behind Midnight Syndicate stops making only the music, and starts providing the visuals. Here, Douglas shares with us the evolution of Midnight Syndicate, directing and writing "The Dead Matter," making the soundtrack and yes, even a second soundtrack.

**SCARS:** How did Midnight Syndicate come to be?

EDWARD DOUGLAS: I've loved horror movies and the supernatural for as long as I can remember. I also love instrumental music because it really sparks the imagination and leaves the interpretation up to the listener. Midnight Syndicate was my way of bringing those two things together. As Midnight Syndicate, Gavin Goszka and I create CDs that are basically "sound-tracks to imaginary films." Atmospheric music blended with some sound effects (circa the old-time radio dramas) that is designed to take you to a world or movie of your own creation.

The discs are mostly horror and fantasy themed and make excellent atmosphere for the Halloween season, role playing games, computer games, haunted attractions, or just reading, writing, and creating to. If you have an active imagination, then our discs are designed for you.

Our first CD was released in 1997. It was more of a solo effort on my part. 1998's "Born of the Night" was our first exclusively-horror themed disc and featured the debut of Gavin. That was the disc that broke us out into the gothic music and Halloween music world. Since then we've

released eight CDs, including a movie soundtrack.

SCARS: Was it your intention from the beginning to distribute your music to haunted attractions all over the world?

ED: We're often referred to as the first "Haunted House Band" and that's pretty accurate - although Disney's creative team was the first to do it back in the 60s with their classic Haunted Mansion LP. The thing was, back in 1997, there were no



good, dark, Halloween music CDs out there. All you had were cheap sound effects cassettes that had been recycled since the 70s and party music compilations (like Monster Mash or Purple People Eater). No one had put the time and effort to put together high-quality, dark, atmospheric Halloween music CD. The cool thing was that there was a demand for this not only from with people that just loved Halloween, the supernatural, and decorating their houses every October, but also the professional haunted attractions and amusement parks. We definitely kept that in mind as we designed our CDs. One of the first things we did back then was to reach out to every haunted attraction and amusement park we could.

Although gothic music, Halloween, and haunted attractions, play a big part in what we do, we've also been able to crossover into creating music for role playing and computer games, which has been rewarding and still very much in line with our "music to imaginary films" concept.

SCARS: On top of your eight original releases, you have also composed the soundtrack for Robert Kurtzman's "The Rage," starring Andrew Divoff. Did you approach that differently from how you normally write music? ED: Very differently. With Midnight Syndicate CDs, it's all about the music and audio experience and making the music as compelling and engaging as possible. There are no visuals, except for the images that run through your head as you listen to our discs, and that allows us a lot of options creatively.

As a movie composer, music is only a cog in the machinery. It is a very critical part - but just one piece of the puzzle nonetheless. The music must be not only very compelling, but also support the images on screen and the director's vision. It has to elevate the whole film, not just sound good. I've heard too many scores that actually detract from the movie either because there's too much going on or the music sounds cool, but just doesn't fit with what's going on screen.

With the exception of some of the main themes, most of the score to "The Rage" was written while watching the movie. That's the way I like to work in order to help ensure that what I'm doing is best for the film and in line with what the director wants. It's similar to writing with Gavin for a Midnight Syndicate disc, because we also have to make sure that our contributions are complimenting each other and further developing the "world" we're trying to create on a CD. The difference is the "world" Gavin and I are trying to create is basically just comprised of ideas and images in our heads.

SCARS: Both Robert Kurtzman and Andrew Divoff are involved with your film, "The Dead Matter." Did doing "The Rage" soundtrack make those connections possible?

ED: Yes. As the composer, I was able to visit the set of "The Rage" during production. After watching how Bob and Gary (Jones) ran their set I knew they would be the perfect match for "The Dead Matter." I approached Bob about the project after filming was complete. He liked what he saw, got onboard, and the rest is history.

I was a fan of Andrew work from "Wishmaster" and "Lost," but it was while scoring "The Rage" and watching his portrayal as the lead villain, Dr. V, that the idea of asking him to play our main vampire in "The Dead Matter" came about. He really delivered for us.

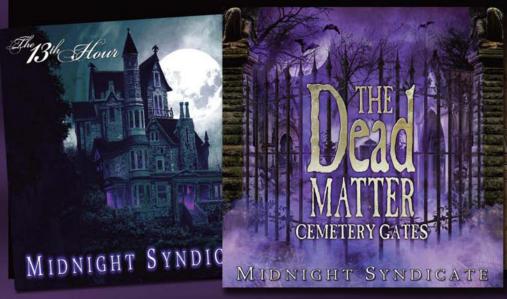
SCARS: Your most recent release is titled "The Dead Matter: Cemetery Gates." Since the movie has its own separate soundtrack being released, what role does "Cemetary Gates" play?

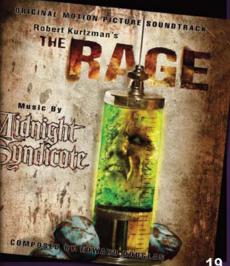
ED: The goal of "The Dead Matter: Cemetary Gates" was to take some of the themes touched on in the movie (vampires, the living dead, Egyptian relics, druids), explore them further, and pull listeners into the world we are creating in the movie. Although several tracks appear in the movie, the disc was designed to stand on its own. We've gotten a lot of praise for that disc from fans and the press alike so that feels great. It allowed us to explore some new ground, as well as pay homage to some of the classic horror themes that inspire us.

The soundtrack to the movie might become a double-disc where one disc is music is from the score and the other is comprised of the rock tracks that appear in the film and several remixes of Midnight Syndicate tracks.

**SCARS:** What's next for Midnight Syndicate?

ED: We've already began plotting out our next disc. We have several themes that we are really excited about and so I'm excited to see which one we decide to go with and begin writing for it. We're also considering some sort of live show. We've been asked about that for many years, but haven't been able to because of our production schedule. To do the kind of show we'd like to do will take a lot of time. We'd like our performances to be a very visual experience, complete with theatries and film and it's something we get closer to pulling the trigger on every year.





# Interview by Matt Molloy

It hurts us that Jim O'Rear, a man of so many talents, still isn't a household name across America. Okay, maybe as he is a member of the SCARS extended family, we're a little biased towards Jim. But on top of being one of our writing contributors, he's also an actor, stuntman, author, musician, and magician. Taking some time out of his incredibly busy schedule, Jim now fills us in on what he's up to this summer.

SCARS: Well Jim, it isn't often that I interview someone with so much going on that I don't even know where to begin! So let's start with THE DEAD MATTER. Tell us about your character, Vampire Junkie Ernie, and what it was like working on the film.

JIM O'REAR: Ernie is a vampire who has fallen from power. He was, once, a rising young vamp on his way to controlling a legion of vampires until Tom Savini's character, Sebed, stepped in and got Ernie strung out on a special vampire drug. Now Ernie is a "plaything" for Sebed; sent out to do worthless errands in exchange for drugs. In THE DEAD MATTER, Sebed sends Ernie on a mission to spy on the master vampire, Vellich, played by Andrew Divoff (THE WISHMASTER, LOST). Needless to say, that doesn't go so well!

THE DEAD MATTER was a wonderful film to work on. The cast and crew were all top notch and I think the finished film is going to be very creepy and original. If you haven't taken a look at the online trailer, yet... what are ya waiting on? The trailer will have you hooked and wanting more. I think fans of the genre are going to be pleased with the final product.

SCARS: You have recently released the book Tennessee Ghosts. What inspired

you to write this spooky novel?

JO: Money! Ha ha ha... just kidding. I had not planned on writing a book, actually. It just fell in my lap. I've always been interested in the paranormal and if I'm around a haunted location I always try to make time to go see it. I've visited haunted locations all across the country as a fun hobby. Well, some representatives from Schiffer Publishing in Pennsylvania stopped by to see me while I was making a celebrity appearance at Dragon-Con, in Atlanta, Georgia. They knew my writing from screenplays and various magazine articles and also knew I was a fan of the paranormal. The reps asked me if I'd be interested in writing a book about haunted places in Tennessee. I thought to myself, "If I don't do it, someone will." So, I agreed and about 12 months later the book hit store shelves across the country.

**SCARS:** Any plans for another book?

JO: Yes, indeed! The current book seems to be doing very well and the publisher is happy. They just contracted me to write a second book, which I'm working on in my spare time. It's also paranormal related but involves the horror film industry. I think it'll be something that every horror movie film fan will want to check out. You'll have to wait awhile for it, though.

**SCARS:** On top of your already impressive list of films you have been a part of, you have a slew of new ones in the works. Can you fill us in on your upcoming goodies?

JO: Wow... do you have enough pages to list them all!? Ha ha ha. I've been very lucky, lately, to be involved in many great projects. I'm really grateful to all of the directors and producers who have wanted to work with me. If you don't mind me rambling for a few moments, I'll try to briefly mention several that are coming up soon.

OLD HABITS DIE HARD should be out later this year. It's a film I recently completed with Kane "Jason" Hodder (FRIDAY THE 13TH, HATCHET), Emmy Award winner Tricia Cast (THE YOUNG & THE RESTLESS), Roger Hewlett (DEXTER, THE CHANGELING), and SCARS calendar girl Stacey Dixon. It's from Bloody Moon Films, directed by Ben Dixon, and feels like a cross between TEXAS CHAINSAW and

DOG just started playing the festival circuit, featuring Debbie Rochon, Tom Sullivan, and a slew of television actors. This one could be described as TEXAS

THE DEVIL'S REJECTS, spiced with loads of dark humor.

CHAINSAW meets BEAUTY AND THE BEAST. Another fun and disturbing tale, based on a true story, about a family that keeps one of their deformed children tied up in a junkyard; raising him like a dog.

THE DEVIL'S PLAYGROUND just wrapped, where I play a sadistic cult leader determined to bring about Armageddon. This one also features Olivia Lovell (DEMON SIGHT), Misty Simmons-Poteet (BRIMSTONE), and Kayla Perkins (HELL-EPHONE).

Speaking of HELL-EPHONE, this one hits DVD very soon. It's about a phone prank that goes horribly wrong and also features Ari "Jason" Lehman (FRIDAY THE 13TH), John

Dugan (TEXAS

CHAINSAW MAS-

SACRE), Playmate

Alex Del Monacco,

and Daniel Emery

Taylor (RETURN OF THE SWAMP THING).

And, speaking of "Hell," I freshly finished HELL HOUSE, based on another true story and also featuring Daniel Emery Taylor (RETURN OF THE SWAMP THING)... directed by Jason Crowe (DEAD MOON RISING).

I recently wrapped on THONG GIRL 4, with Troma's Lloyd Kaufman and Playmate Alex Del Monacco. It's a fun and silly superhero spoof. This was my second journey into the world of Thong Girl. I was also in part 3 of the series.

I'm about to begin shooting
POST MORTEM AMERICA 2021 with Linnea
Quigley (RETURN OF
THE LIVING DEAD)
and SCARS calendar
girl Monique
Dupree.



This one is a wild mixture of genres... it's a western, zombie, revenge flick in the style of Tarantino and Rodriguez. Very stylized and wild stuff.

Plus I'm making a ton of personal appearances at events such as Fright Night Film Fest, Dark Carnival, B-Movie Film Festival, ScreenFest, and many more. There's a listing of these events on my website.

So, that's some of the most recent news! Are ya sorry you asked?

**SCARS:** I'm sure you love all of your films equally, but are there any that stand out a little more as possible favorites?

JO: The standard answer for most actors is, "The one I'm working on right now." Haha. It's a tough call because there are so many different things about several of

them that I enjoyed for various reasons. I loved working with Academy Award winner Martin Sheen on THE BREAK because I have never met a more gracious actor... COP & 1/2 with Burt Reynolds was incredible solely due to the director, Henry Winkler (yep, "Fonzie" on HAPPY DAYS), who was the most cordial and professional director I've ever had the opportunity to work with... DAY OF THE DEAD was a treat because of Romero and the lasting friendship I still have to this day with Tom Savini... SCREAM FARM was a treat because I got to be a complete S.O.B. to everyone... OLD HABITS was brilliant because of the strength of the ensemble cast and fabulous crew... THE DEAD MATTER (we mentioned earlier) was another fabulous ensemble cast and crew... THE DEEPENING because it allowed me to work with my long-time friends Gunnar "Leatherface" Hansen,

Debbie Rochon, Ted Alderman (TOR-MENT), and David Polk (SECOND NOAH)... Gosh! The list could go on and on!

**SCARS:** What is Allied Horror?

JO: Allied Horror is a production company that I set up to produce feature horror films. Through it I have co-produced titles such as VAMPYRE TALES (with Debbie Rochon and Amber Newman), THE DEEPENING (with Gunnar Hansen and Debbie Rochon), SCREAM FARM (with Ted Alderman and Kimberly Lynn Cole), ACONITE (with Reggie Bannister, Linnea Quigley, Gunnar Hansen, and Debbie Rochon), LIVING DEAD LIVE, and more. Later this year we will be branching out a bit, though. I've just made a three-picture deal to produce a paranormal documentary, another feature horror film, and... believe it or not... a romantic comedy that

we will be shooting in Costa Rica.

**SCARS:** What, during the few times a year that you have any, do you do on your down time?

JO: Down time? What's that? Haha. Actually, I enjoy shutting myself up at home and visiting with my family. I, kind of, turn off the world during those times, rarely answering the phone or venturing out anywhere.

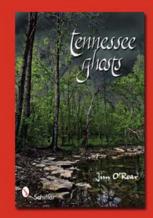
SCARS: Where can one go to track your every move and learn all there is to know about Jim O'Rear?

JO: Pick your favorite, as there are several web locations to turn to:

1) JimORear.com is my official website and contains lots of updates.

- 2) MySpace.com/JimORear is a good place to read up on new blogs and view new movie trailers.
- 3) Twitter.com/JimORear is for silly updates... Random odd thoughts that may cross my mind from time to time.
- 4) I'm also on www.FaceBook.com, but it's not updated as much as the MySpace page
- 5) AND you can find me on the SCARS MAGAZINE website (www.ScarsMagazine.com) under the "blogs" section for regular updates.

I want to thank all my friends and fans who visit me on these websites daily and continue to support me and my projects!



## Tennessee Ghosts by Jim O'Rear

Review by Kevin Fay

With the popularity of the paranormal these days, there has been an onslaught of TV shows, movies, video games and especially books trying to cash in on the general public's newfound love of things that go bump in the night. Expectedly, most authors provide readers with embellished stories and a heaping helping of good old American bullshit. Unfortunately, this seems to be a necessary evil. Ghosts sell and people are buying.

Once in a while however, you get to read a book by somebody that seems to put things in perspective and concentrate on what the public originally loved about ghosts: A good ghost story. Jim O'Rear's "Tennessee Ghosts" from Schiffer Publishing is one of these books. From the legendary case of the Bell family and their infamous witch to the ghost of Hank Williams' ghost still playing on the stage at the Ryman Auditorium's Grand Ole Opry, O'Rear's approach to the material is straightforward, well written and above all, entertaining. Well researched historical backgrounds of each story are presented to the readers in a casual and fun manner which might actually cause the reader to learn something about the history of O'Rear's Tennessee if their not careful. And while I won't give any spoilers, I dare anybody in their right mind to get through Chapter 27 and NOT keep a light on when they go to bed that night.











## PEL BOMISON LOOK INTO THE HEART OF LA'S HORROR HOT SPOT PATR PELICACIES PL Park

Dark Delicacies, is a horror based store which is well known for it's amazing array of rare books, dvd's, collectibles, and in store signings. Scars caught up with the store's owner Del Howison, for an inside scoop.

SCARS: So tell us how you're inspiration for the store began, and how you came up with the name.

DH: The inspiration came from Sue and I both being horror fans when we moved in together. We wanted to decorate and have things to reflect our taste but at that time nothing was really available. So we decided to go on a mission to find all of that sort of thing and have it one place in case there were other horror freaks like us.

The name was a long time coming. We wanted somthing that reflected horror (thus the "Dark") and something that said we weren't selling cheap Hallmark card shop crap where the

eyes blink red and it makes that annoying screechtone noise (thus the "Delicacies"). It actually wasn't until we put up our website that we realized the there was a "Del" in Delicacies.

SCARS: What can one find at Dark Delicacies?

DH: Everything you would expect to find in a book and gift store but with a horror motif like "Bride of Frankenstein" bread plates and "Skull" mugs, etc.

> SCARS: What makes Dark Delicacies, the unique store it is?

DH: The book chains can't do what we do with the genre as it always seems like their books serve mostly as wallpaper. The giftware and jewelry and other items are a reflection of my wife's, Sue's, taste. Add to the mix many, many personal relationships







with people associated with the Horror field and you have the signing events we hold nearly every weekend. It's a store but it's almost not a store. It's a clubhouse where people in the field and lover's of the field can gather.

**SCARS**: Tell the Scars readers about these wonderful in store signings that you host.

DH: They started the very first month we were in business with Sara Karloff and have grown and continued ever since. We are also well known for, what I call, our group grope where we get multiple signers to sign at the same time. It helps customers with their sense of discovery and helps take the onus of the signing off of an individual signer. We try to cover every field we can think of with horror - Authors, Composers, screenwriters, Directors, Artists, etc. Plus we're also open for suggestion.

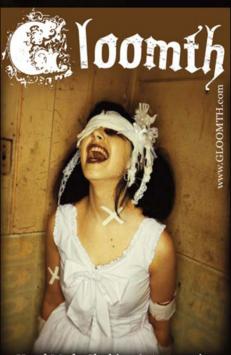
**SCARS**: Besides being owner of the store, tell us about the other projects you've been involved in.

**DH**: I came out to California after 20 years as a stage actor, journalist and PR person. Once I arrived I worked in all of those fields out here. I've been in over a dozen films of varying budgets edited four books, written and had published short stories of terror. I would now like to sell a screenplay and finally become a SAG member.

SCARS thanks you for taking the time to talk with us, as well as letting me video your in store events!

Dark Delicacies 4213 W. Burbank Blvd. Burbank, Ca. 91505





Hand Made Clothing & Accessories Inspired by Your Favorite Nightmares

## THE DEAD MIATTER ON THE SET WITH JIM O'REAR

It was a warm, sunny afternoon in Mansfield, Ohio, when I arrived on location at the historic Bissman Building to film my first scene for Midnight Syndicate Films' The Dead Matter, featuring Andrew Divoff (Wishmaster, Lost), horror veteran Tom Savini (Planet Terror, From Dusk Til Dawn), and television staple Jason Carter (Babylon 5, Angel). As I approached the enormous and creepy structure, I couldn't think of a better setting for the atmospheric fear fest I was about to embark upon. Inspired by EC Comics, The Twilight Zone, Tales From The Crypt, and Creepshow, The Dead Matter tells a story of vampirism, the living dead, and ancient occult relics... all of which would be right at home in this spooky edifice. The Bissman, nicknamed "Dead Souls Studio," has a long history of haunted activities and was made famous in The Shawshank Redemption. Getting to spend time in this building was just the first of many wonderful experiences to come.

As I got through security and onto the set, I was promptly greeted by co-producer Gary Jones (Army of Darkness, Xena), who graciously introduced me to key personnel, ushered me to my trailer, and made sure that I felt right at home. I noticed, almost immediately, that the feeling on the set was very different from most productions... especially productions as ambitious as this one. There were no attitudes, no egos, and no "backstage politics." Instead, it was a true feeling of family and camaraderie; a group of talent

bonding to make the best production possible. I knew that I was going to be in for a good time.

For over a decade, Midnight Syndicate has been creating soundtracks for the imagination. Formed by composer/director Edward Douglas in 1996, the band's music has become a staple of the Halloween season, in addition to making an impact in the haunted attraction, gothic music, and roleplaying game industries. With a catalog of horror music CDs that blend dark, orchestral horror movie style music with sound effects, the band, consisting of Edward Douglas and Gavin Goszka, has contributed soundtracks to everything from Barbara Walters television specials and Monday Night Football to X-Box games and King Diamond concerts.

Before forming Midnight Syndicate, Edward Douglas directed, scored, and produced a feature-length horror film entitled, The Dead Mtter. Driven by a strong belief in the story, the film was shot for under \$2,000 and released with the intention of remaking the film later on a larger scale. In 2004, Douglas reunited with co-writer Tony Demci to begin what would be a two year-long process of re-writing The Dead Matter script and then preparing it for production, with the help of Ethan Dettenmaier of Snap Kick Productions.



Douglas also reunited with Christopher Robichaud, one of the original films actors who reprises his role of "Frank" for the new version. Chris told me about his original casting, "I was in a lounge at John Carroll University-when Ed walked in to post a call for auditions. We struck up a conversation and discovered that we grew up in the same small town, Chardon, OH, and shared a passion for horror movies. I had been acting in theatre all through high school and into college, but it was the first time I considered stepping in front of a camera. I originally wanted to play a vam-

pire, though it became pretty clear during my audition that I was better suited to play 'Frank.' I've cherished the role ever since."

The Dead Matter is a story-driven horror film drenched in the dark atmospheric world of Midnight Syndicate's music. It's about a vampire relic with occult powers that falls into the hands of a grief-stricken young woman who will do anything to contact her dead brother. Genre fans are sure to be delighted by this highly original mixture of vampires, zombies, and magic. "It's a great story that we've been waiting over ten years to be able to share once again," says Ed Douglas. "I'm excited because The Dead Matter is something different - something I've been wanting to see as a huge fan of the horror genre, but haven't lately. It doesn't ignore or spoof the classic films we grew up loving but instead builds on them, taking the themes of zombies and vampires in some unexpected directions - giving fans of the genre a cool story accented by interesting characters."

Having known Douglas for several years and being completely enchanted by his musical works, I jumped at the chance to play "Vampire Junkie Ernie" when Ed called me. I knew that Ed's attention to detail and quality was really going to make this production special. In addition to that, he had attached phenomenal talent (noted above) and crew members, including coproducer Robert Kurtzman (The Devil's Rejects, From Dusk Til Dawn, KNB FX) and his Ohio-based production company Precinct 13 Entertainment and makeup effects man David Greathouse (The Stand, Return of the Living Dead 3).

After getting settled into my trailer, I stepped outside for a breath of fresh air, before reporting to makeup, and ran into my old friend Tom Savini. We had just spent a few days together in Indiana, one month earlier, and discussed our characters relationships and developed a backstory between the two of us. Horror fans know that Tom is a genius with a makeup kit, but after they see The Dead Matter they are also going to finally realize (what I've known all along) that he is a fantastically gifted actor. His portrayal of Sebed is, by far, the best performance I've ever seen him offer. It was a joy to act across from this master.

Douglas agrees with my praise of Savini. "I'm a huge fan of Tom's work," he says. "So it started when I approached him to sign my copy of Dawn of the Dead at a Chiller Theatre convention almost eight years ago. I gave him some of our CDs, he really liked them, and our friendship grew from there. He used our music for the pilot of his Chill Factor series. Since then I'd been waiting for the right project to work together on. The Dead Matter is the first Midnight Syndicate movie, a zombie flick, predominantly Midwest crew, and we're shooting a couple hours west of the Monroeville Mall. It was the perfect opportunity. The best part is, Tom did such an excellent job. It's one of my favorite Savini performances. Like, Tom... you and I, Jim, had been talking about working together for years, so the two of you were at the top of my list when I began casting."

Savini talks about his role and experience on the set, explaining, "I am a vampire leader, named Sebed, with lots of women and I am, sort of, calling the shots... until... well, we certainly don't want to spoil the ending now do we? It's been a blast; good clothes, good food, and good actors to work with. And, I got to work with you and Andrew Divoff!"

After a few minutes of "catching up" with Tom, we reported to the makeup trailer where we ran into the incredibly talented Andrew Divoff, fresh off his appearances in ABC's Lost and Steven Spielberg's newest Indiana Jones adventure. Divoff plays the villainous role of Vellich and commands the screen with every movement he makes. We joined Andrew in the chairs as David Greathouse, Joseph Shaw, and "The Creature Crew" (as Bob Kurtzman calls his Precinct 13 guys) went to work on us.

Douglas praises his makeup and effects crew, "Although this is not an FX-driven film, the FX we do have needed to be cool and it IS a very heavy special FX makeup film (as you'd expect). Our lead in that department was David "House" Greathouse. He did a tremendous job overseeing everything from makeup to many of the FX props. The P13 FX team was instrumental in building special props and designing our big outdoor set, which is one of the central locations in the film. P13 is handling the visual effects, as well.

To me, the best CG is the CG you don't notice (like what P13 did on The Devil's Rejects). That's what we're going for on this one."

While we spent time in the Creature Crew's chairs, Andrew Divoff and I discussed his involvement with the film. "My involvement with THE DEAD MATTER has to do directly with Ed," explains Divoff. "We had talked about the project mostly through mutual friends. Robert Kurtzman's association with the project had a lot to do with my joining up. And, it must be said, playing a vampire is always an intriguing prospect. However, my role in the production of the film is not that demanding, really. It mostly consists of staying out of the way of progress. My contribution is mainly as actor in the film and hopefully as one who sets a good example for his younger co-stars."

After our makeup was finished, I went on set to watch Ed Douglas direct the lovely Sean Serino (The Rage, Glory Road) and Tom Nagel (Dracula's Curse) in a scene. Ed seemed extremely relaxed behind the camera and directed the actors as if he was an old pro. Calling "cut" on the scene, Ed immediately approached me with a big smile, shaking my hand, hugging my neck, and welcoming me to the set... furthering the atmosphere of family and on-set camaraderie.

Happy with the performances he had just shot, Ed was ready to bring Savini and I onto the set for our first scene together. During shooting, something happened to cause a stir, though. I asked Tom what happened, afterwards, and he explained, We were in the middle of shooting something serious and one of the vampire girls dropped something in the background. It made a lot of noise. So, in character, I mumbled 'clumsy bitch.' I could hear a gasp off camera in the hallway and a comment about what a rotten thing I had just said. When Ed called 'cut,' I immediately went to the girl and explained that I was just involved in the scene and it wasn't me saying those words... it was the character. You know, sometimes, in character, you improvise depending on what is happening... but, I think there are those that think it was me scolding her, or something."

After completing our scene we had the opportunity to hang out with some of the ac-

tors while equipment was set up for the next take. I was curious about some of the technical differences between the original production of TDM and this new version. Chris Robichaud explains, "The differences are like night and day. For the original TDM, we had a skeleton crew (pun intended), virtually no money, and only the time to spare that our work and school

Director Ed Douglas approaches, taking a brief break from the set. I wondered how he was lucky enough to hook up with such great talent on his first official movie. Ed told me, "Bob Kurtzman contacted me in 2006 to score his film The Rage. It was through that collaboration that I met Gary Jones and some of the other artists at Precinct 13. After a visit to the set of The

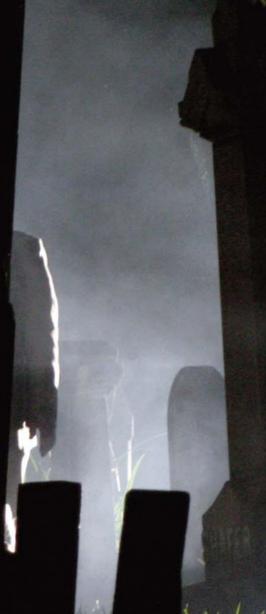


schedules allowed. It was guerrilla moviemaking, to be sure. But, the new version is a professional production from start to finish. Ed is able to focus on getting the performances from the actors that he wants. By surrounding himself with great talent on the production and crew side of things, this time around Ed can devote the majority of his attention to the acting, which is crucial in a character-driven movie like

Rage, and seeing how Gary and Bob ran their shows, I knew they were the perfect match for The Dead Matter remake. I pitched Bob the project after The Rage wrapped production, he liked it, and the rest is history."

The film schedule covered a four-week period with locations primarily in and around Mansfield, Ohio. In addition to the haunted and historic Bissman Building,

another well-known location hosts scenes for the film - The Mansfield Reformatory. Most people know the reformatory as the prison used in the blockbuster films The Shawshank Redemption and Air Force One. It's an unbelievable location with tons of atmosphere. Douglas notes, "We were fortunate enough to have the cooperation of the community there. Really



friendly people. We were able to shoot in their park, tavern, library, an old school-house, and in an old hospital. We also found a small, isolated 19th century cemetery and abandoned church in the wilderness near the neighboring town of Bellville. That one location supplied us with some of my favorite footage from the shoot."

I quickly learned that The Dead Matter did



have its share of problems, though. Mostly related to the weather. Douglas explains, "It was the area's rainiest August in twenty years. During one huge storm, while AD Phil Garrett was driving our makeup truck to the next location, Phil and the truck were almost crushed by a falling tree. Not only did that storm hold up production that night, but by the next day a lot of Mansfield had flooded. I remember driving by the freeway exit I had used the night before - only now all I could see was water and the roofs of sunken cars. Roads were closed and the basement of one of our main locations was underwater as well. We had lost more than a day (in an extremely tight schedule) and we had to rearrange the rest of the shoot in a matter of hours."

My first day of shooting came to a close and it was time to get some much needed rest before the next day began: an exterior shoot that was to be filled with a lot of action for the entire cast.

Once again, on the next day, arriving on set was a pleasure. I was greeted as if I had been a part of their "film family" for the entire four weeks they had been shopting. My wardrobe was waiting and I was ushered right into makeup as C.B. Spencer (Ally McBeal, Even Stevens) and Brian Van Camp (New World Disorder) were preparing for work. Van Camp explained, "I play Mark Pym, apprentice vampire hunter and partner to Jason Carter's 'Ian McCallister.' Mark is a lot of fun to play because he poses some unusual challenges and is a great exercise in understatement. He is a man of few words. The challenge

is finding a way to maintain a heavy presence in the scenes while doing and saying very little."

"It's been a lot of fun," Van Camp continues. "From day one the cast really gelled. Even after shooting for twelve or thirteen hours on set, we would go back to the hotel and hang out for several more hours (mid-Ohio is not always burdened with a lot of other options) or we'd go see a film, go canoeing, or whatever."

Knowing that Brian Van Camp's character has several scenes with Jason Carter and Andrew Divoff, I was curious how his experiences were with them. Brian states, "They have very different approaches to the craft. What they have in common is that they are both very conscientious actors, and generous on set. Andy has a quiet strength about him, which is quite powerful, and on set he is quite private. Jason, a dear friend of mine, works differently. They are both wonderful actors, and the difference in techniques illustrates to me that presence and creativity come from different places in each of us."

It came time for me to shoot some scenes with Andrey Divoff. We loaded onto golf darts and proceeded to ride into the deep, dark woods. After a few minutes a spooky glow could be seen creeping through the tall trees as we neared the set. "Wow," is all I could say as the golf carts parked us in a small clearing. Ed found another incredible location!

Douglas ran us through the paces in very few takes, knowing exactly what he wanted out of both of us. I won't give away too much, but let's just say that there is some struggling and quite a bit of blood between Andrew and I. Needless to say, it was a lot of fun, with Divoff commenting afterwards, "That scene was great. And very intense! You did some trippy stuff there and really came across creepy crawly."

Divoff's praise for his other co-stars is equally as high, explaining later, "It's a great pleasure to work with Jason Carter who is completely committed to playing the Vampire hunter McCallister. Acting is never a solo thing, so acting and reacting between the cast members is what defines the characters individually. It's also great to work with P13 alums Sean Serino and Donna Williams and with Tom Nagel, C.B. Spencer, Brian Van Camp, and, of course, the incomparable Tom Savini. Tom is an artist in his own right, as you already know. And, one of my proudest moments in the film was getting to film a scene with my nephew Andre Mercado."

While equipment was being set for the

"Definitely John Carpenter as a director/composer (someone who can do both well). It was Star Wars, Steven Spielberg, and John Williams that got me dreaming of filmmaking as a kid. Stephen King and Tales From the Crypt comics (actually everything EC ever printed) are huge influences. More than anything, it's horror films. I almost always find something I enjoy in any horror film. The Dead Matter is great because it gave me the opportunity to use these influences and work with a lot of people I've followed through the years, such as yourself, Savini, Big Chuck Schodowski, and Count Gore DeVol."

As the day came to a close and I was preparing to go back to my hotel room, I asked Douglas about his plans for the finished film. Douglas explained, "The movie will be completed in mid-April. I plan on taking it on the festival circuit, both here and abroad - as many as I can get to. We've had a lot of interest from distributors, so we'll, also, begin to pursue a wide release once the movie is closer to completion. Midnight Syndicate's parent company, Entity Productions, is the secevery year, so that may or may not be a factor in how we approach distribution. In an era of remakes and sequels, there is a growing demand for some good, original, story-driven horror movies. That's what I believe we have in The Dead Matter. I can't wait to share it with the horror community."

For more information about The Dead Matter, check out the official website at

www.TheDeadMatter.com and www.My-Space.com/TheDeadMatterFilm.



## ALIEN RAIDERS

**INTERVIEW BY J.C. WALSH** 

#### Paying Homage to classics such as John Carpenter's The Thing, Alien, and The Hidden, Director Ben Rock tells us what lurks behind his debut Horror, sci fi thriller Alien Raiders and what might lurk within ourselves.

SCARS: Tell us about Alien Raiders and what you hoped you accomplished directing this film?

Ben Rock: Alien Raiders is my first feature, and honestly I was just hoping to make a fun roller coaster ride of a movie, maybe even one that hearkened back to the creature features I grew up watching. As a child of the 1980's, horror got its hooks into me in films like The Thing, The Howling, and the first two Alien movies. These movies relied on strong casting and the building of tension to engage the audience, and even though the special FX were AMAZING, they weren't the only reason to watch the movies.

Since we had a low budget and very little time to shoot it (15 days), I knew we were going to have to lean heavily on characters to pull the audience through the movie, so we tried to cast strong actors who the audience would bond with and ultimately care about them living or dying.

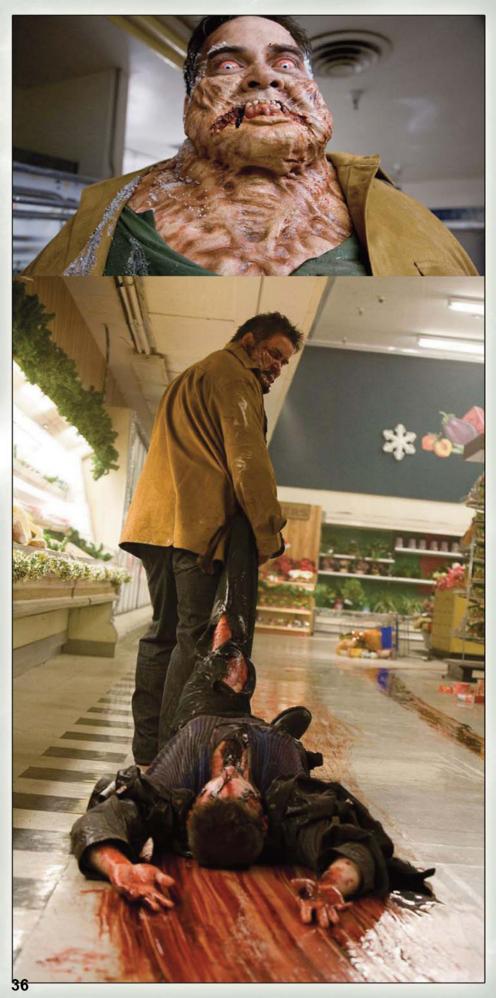
But really, at the end of the day, I wanted to make suspense-thriller ride of a film, an enjoyable way to spend 85 minutes.

SCARS: What was it that you loved most about working on Alien Raiders?

BR: It's often been said that first-time feature directors should surround themselves with people WAY more experienced than themselves, and I think my favorite part of this film was having the opportunity to do that.

On the cast side, I was privileged to work with three of my favorite actors from TV -Carlos Bernard from 24, Mathew St. Patrick from Six Feet Under, and Rockmond Dunbar from Prison Break. In addition to the rest of our amazing cast (which includes Courtney Ford who was just cast in the new season of my favorite TV show - Dexter), the people behind the camera weren't just first-rate, they were kind of legendary. Our cinematographer, Walt Lloyd, shot Sex, Lies, and Videotape for Steven Soderbergh, Short Cuts for Robert Altman, and Pump Up the Volume for Alan Moyle. He shot my friend Jieho Lee's first feature, The Air I Breathe, and Jeiho and Air's writer Bob DeRosa convinced him to meet with me and I was blown away. So much of what I enjoy about the film is the look of it. And Walt brought on camera operator Robert Reed Altman (Robert Altman's son) to operate the camera. Our editor, Augie Hess, worked with William Friedkin for years, including recutting The Exorcist for the 2000 rerelease. Lastly, our composer Kays Alatrakchi is both a good friend and long-time collaborator of mine and it was amazing getting to work with someone





like him with his attention to detail and innovation. Though the score is primarily electronic, Kays filled it with organic samples of his own creation, giving the movie a totally unique sound.

We were actually shooting the film during the WGA strike, so these people were available, and what I learned from each of them could fill volumes. And although directing one's first feature is a little bit like losing one's virginity in front of 200 teamsters every day, they took it easy on me and helped me make a film that I think is many magnitudes better than I had any right to expect it to be.

**SCARS:** What films and Directors inspired you and was it something you wanted to incorporate into the film?

BR: The number one inspiration for this film was John Carpenter's The Thing. To this day, that film blows my mind. It may be one of the most perfect monster movies ever made, and it's just an amazing character study of people under pressure. Like Twelve Angry Men with an alien. Carpenter's film Assault on Precinct 13 was also a huge inspiration, for the conflict within/conflict without dichotomy.

Alien was also a huge inspiration, and what it has in common with The Thing is the amazing cast of people who feel like real people, not stock characters, not models. John Jackson, our casting director (who happens to be the "send more paramedics" zombie from Return of the Living Dead, for real! That's actually him!), and I really looked at The Thing and Alien as a model for how this kind of film can be properly cast.

Other movies that definitely served as an inspiration to me were things like The Hidden and Children of Men. I watched all of these movies over and over while we were prepping Alien Raiders. But mostly, I watched The Thing. And made everyone else do the same.

SCARS: There's a lot of Character development that really makes the backbone of the story. How was building a solid cast to shape and mold the characters and make them so dimensional?

BR: It was job one, really. John Jackson and I had a strict "no bimbos" policy in

the casting. Everyone had to LOOK like they could be in these real places and in these situations. We wanted it to have a feel of real people. The next thing was to find actors who weren't afraid to put their own stamp on the characters a bit.

As I said, we were shooting this during the WGA strike and the script had been written before the actors were cast. Usually, I would want to do a rewrite to make the parts fit the actors, but since that wasn't going to happen we just endeavored to bring on actors who could truly inhabit their roles, bring them a sense of humanity or even humor, and not be afraid to play with the dialogue. In this regard, we truly hit the jackpot with the entire cast. Some of them, like Joel McCrary, Tom Kiesche, Keith Hudson, Bryan Krasner, and Phillip Newby had an immediate comfort level with me because I'd worked with them before in theater. But the rest of the cast, like Derek Basco, Courtney Ford, Samatha Streets, Jeff Licon, and Roberta Bassin were told explicitly to feel free to make their characters more their own, and they did. They all gave their characters relationships, a sense of backstory, etc. Like when Sterling rounds up all the supplies to

save the hostages' fingers, Kane looks at her like she's an idiot and she gives it right back to him.

**SCARS:** What about the atmosphere and the steady build of tension? Tell us about the direction took to get to the climactic boiling point of the film.

BR: I really spent a lot of time thinking about the visual arc of the film, how we start in one place and go to another in our visual approach. Originally, I'd wanted to make the aisles narrower and narrower as the film went along, but once we were at the real location and saw what a timedrain it would be to do that, it was obvious that wasn't going to happen. We had things hard-wired into the script, like the lights going out in the store, that we seized on to visually build tension and make it more suspenseful. Walt used green light in a subtle way to show the encroachment of the alien situation - the further we were in the story, the greener things became. But the real atmosphere-builder is in the performances. If we never winked at the camera, if the audience could believe in these people, and if they were in real fear, then we could tighten the thumbscrews

more and more as the film went along.

SCARS: Tell us about the films special effects.

BR: I used to be a special-effects makeup guy, so I have a particular affinity for doing things practically. CGI is something you can't get away from these days, but when you can pull something off in-camera, I think it always works better because the actors actually react to it live. Also, at our budget I knew that we weren't going to be able to be a nonstop VFX extravaganza, but if we could limit our VFX to a few places where they'd really make a difference we could get more bang for our buck.

So it was fun to come up with a monster that could be done practically, figure out the morphology of our aliens, and then see them come into being in the real world. As I said, we kept the VFX to a bare minimum – a company called Engine Room did the finger-growing-back shot, the veins-under-the-face shot, the knife-through-the-throat shot, for us, and a bunch of wire removal, starfields added into night skies, and general cleanup were



done by a really talented bunch of freelance VFX guys including Tom Moser and Brad Mueller.

SCARS: Is there any chance of a Sequel?

BR: All hope of a sequel lies in the financial success of this first one, and since it's a straight-to-video title we won't really know how well it's done for months and months. Julia Fair and I have come up with a few ideas for sequels, and we're very excited to do it.

**SCARS:** Do you have any previous films you've work on and are there any projects lined up for the future?

BR: Well, the best-known film I ever worked on was The Blair Witch Project, which I served as the film's production designer (I know, begin "how did you build the woods?" jokes now). Before that, I'd been a special effects makeup artist on several low-budget films shot in the southeast, including Mutant Species, Raw Justice, The P.A.C.K., and Heroine of Hell. For me, it was an amazing experience to see these films get made first-hand, and they all got released so I was able to see how they turned out. I was still in film school while I was working on most of these, so I could go back home and apply stuff I'd learned – ways to really put the

money on the screen – on my own projects.

After Blair Witch blew up, I was lucky enough to move into directing (I quit makeup in 1997), writing and directing specials that supported the film. Since then, I've worked as a director on marketing projects for Hellboy, Audi, The 4400, and True Blood to name a few.

Right now I'm working on a few projects that hopefully will get up and running soon. The biggest one is a horror/thriller film written by Mark Patton called World Famous. It's a story whose hero might actually be the most notorious serial killer in the world, or he might just look a lot like him. I like to think of it as somewhere between The Hitcher and True Romance. It's fucking dark, and hopefully we'll get it going soon.

**SCARS:** Was Alien Raiders featured in any film festivals? If so, tell us a little bit about the experience.

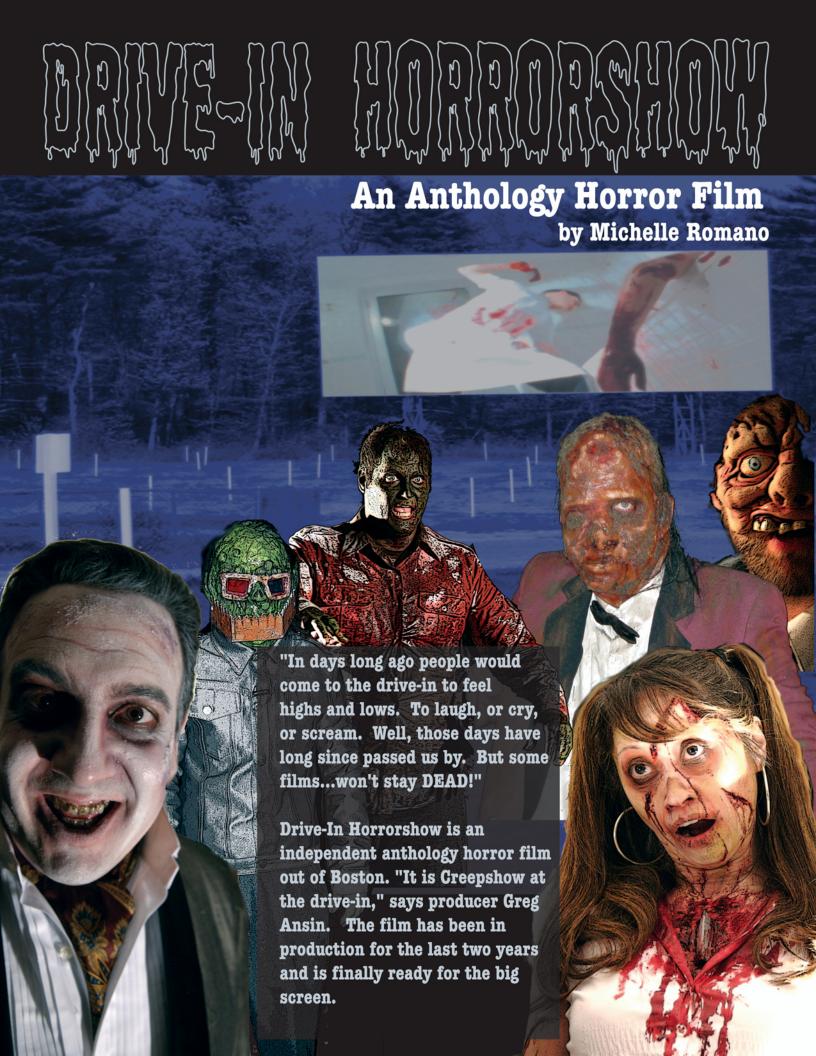
BR: We actually played a bunch of film festivals, starting with Austin's Fantastic Fest. I can't think of a better place to have premiered the film than that festival, with horror fans and press from all over the world excited to see it. We got some buzz, a positive review from Fearnet's Scott

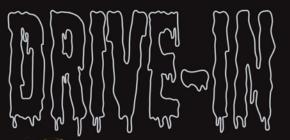
Weinberg, and we were invited to a bunch of other film festivals. We ended up playing about sixteen festivals between September and February, including Shriekfest, Shockerfest, the New York City Horror Film Festival, the Terror Film Festival, the Freak Show Horror Film Festival, the Eerie Horror Film Festival, the International Horror and Sci Fi Film Festival, and the Boston Sci Fi Marathon. We won awards at a bunch of them, which was cool, but the best thing ever was being able to show the film to an audience-full of hardcore horror and/or sci fi fans. I am a huge fan myself, and I tried as best I could to make the kind of film I would want to see. So seeing it with those people was the biggest high of all.

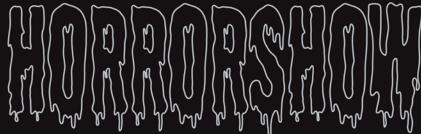
**SCARS:** If there was one movie that you always wanted to direct, what would it be?

BR: I can be very specific in answering that question: My good friend Bob DeRosa (from The Air I Breathe) wrote a script for me to direct called Oblivion. It's a total mindfuck of a film with an amazing female lead. We've been working on it for about six years, so hopefully we can get it going soon-ish. In the meantime, I'm happy to get going on some World Famous.









AN ANTHOLOGY HORROR FILM



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Billy Troll is my loyal assistant. This drive-in is getting so old, and there aren't too many spare parts in the wasteland these days. Billy Troll can fix anything we need him to, even if he doesn't have the proper parts or tools. He always gets the films running.



Zombie Frank runs the ticket booth and is our security. He may not be the brightest bulb in the projection booth, but Zombie Frank makes up for it with his brawn. No one messes with our zombie.



Teenage Axe Victim runs the snack bar, preparing our scary snacks - everything from Blood Smoothies to a juicy Brain Burger (with or without cheese). She isn't all there upstairs - in fact, she makes Zombie Frank look like a genius - but she is a hell of a cook.



You came to see the show, right? Here's what's in store for you...





The first tale in our night of terror, Pig is a classic story of those darn nasty college boys...and their horny little minds! Sometimes they think they can do anything they want and not have any consequences...but she will teach them! And make them pay, brutally and justly. The hunted can become the hunter so easily.













An Anthology Horror Film

Ahh, young Jamie. Such a sweet boy. A nice boy. A smart boy. But his family....well, let's just say they leave a lot to be desired. They don't understand Jamie at all. In fact, they mock and tease him. They have had the upper hand for a long time, but the tables are about to be turned...thanks to something living in Jamie's closet! Sometimes if you push someone far enough, they push you back!











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A serial killer stalks the streets of a quiet town. They call him The Meat Man...because he butchers his victims and only takes the finest cuts of meat! Tommy and Oakley Doyle are terrified of The Meat Man. If they want to survive until their parents get home they will need to keep their wits about them. Will they be The Meat Man's next victims?











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So come join us.. if you dare!

DriveInHorrorShow.com





## Indie Film Making

by Greg Ansin & Michael Neel

#### So you want to make an independent horror movie?

Well, it is not as hard as you think. All you need is a lot of patience and time. Yes, time will be the BIGGEST expense on the film. So if you're in a rush, an indie film might kill you (unless you're into that sort of thing)...

#### Here are questions we get from people all the time:

#### Isn't it expensive to make a film?

It can be but if you stick to your budget you can know exactly how much it will cost. Like everything in life it costs money, but in the end you will have a product to sell. A product you love.

Hey, if you can't find the money right now, plug into the local film scene. Try working on a film or two, in whatever role you can. Network. See what works and what doesn't. Use the experince as a knowledge base. Who knows what you'll learn or who'll you'll meet? People are always looking for ideas for a film. A film set is a community, and the more sets you work on the bigger the community gets. You can't be in the game if you are not in the arena.



#### I found some money for a film...but it isn't a lot. What now?

So, you are doing your movie on a shoestring budget, nothing wrong with that. Take your time with pre-production. This costs nothing but your time. Make sure the script you pick has a good story with characters people will want to watch. This probably sounds obvious, but if the script isn't good then you're at a disadvantage from the beginning!

#### Next, is this story something you can actually film?

Can you really afford an army of midget ninja-vampires? No? So drop it. Or change it (hey, maybe they don't have to be midgets!) Pick a story you can do and a story that means something do you. You are going to have to be the film's biggest fan. So next...

#### Do I really have to storyboard every shot in the film?

Many people rush over this step only to pay for it later. This is the place to say "what if we did this shot like this, what if the actress is in shadow, what is the light like and on and on...." You don't want to do these things on set. Once you are happy with all your storyboards, break out the script into corresponding segments (there is script writing software that can help you) and then put them all in a notebook. Now you know exactly what you want to film. Again, all this will cost you is your time, so hopefully you can on get to the next step...

#### What about casting?

Casting your movie is the most important thing you will do in pre-production. A good actor or actress will make the film and vice-versa. Knowing what you want in an actor or actress is important, but be open to people's interpretations of a part - sometimes they will give you something better than what you had in mind. If you have a hard time casting a specific role, you may have to wait for right person. Again, your time. If you know someone who is a good actor, you may want to write a part with them in mind.

If people like your project, they will often work for low wages but don't expect people to work for free. That being said you'd be surprised at how people will give you a break if they believe in the project.

Now on to decisions about crew, locations and format...and like always, these just take your time!

For more information, please visit our Film Maker's Blog at www.driveinhorrorshow.com/Blog



#### Michael Neel

Director of "Drive-In Horrorshow"

Michael is a life-long horror fan and has worked on many film projects - horror, documentary, bad TV shows, you name it. Mike@GrimFilms.com



#### Greg Ansin

Producer of "Drive-In Horrorshow" Greg has worked on a variety of indie movies over the last 10 years. "Don't be afraid to make your film." Greg@GrimFilms.com

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